

Please cancel claim 16 without prejudice to the possibility of filing one or more continuing applications directed to the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend claim 17 as follows:

B2 17. (Amended) The instrument of claim 15, said member having a plurality of said suction ports, each said suction port being interconnected to said at least one suction line by a respective one of said suction apertures.

Please cancel claims 18 and 20-25 without prejudice to the possibility of filing one or more continuing applications directed to the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend claim 26 as follows:

B3 26. (Amended) A suction member for fixing a portion of a beating part by applying a negative pressure through said suction member, said suction member comprising a body having a surface configured to engage the portion of the beating heart, at least one suction port having a distal opening through said surface and adapted to engage the surface of the beating heart, a suction aperture fluidly connected to each said suction port, and a suction conduit passing within said body and fluidly connecting with each said suction aperture, said suction conduit being in fluid communication with a source of negative pressure.

[Please amend claim 27 as follows:]

27. (Amended) The suction member of claim 26, wherein said body contains a plurality of said suction ports and a plurality of said suction apertures respectively connecting said suction ports to said suction conduit, wherein each said suction aperture has a cross-sectional area that is smaller than a cross-sectional area of said port to which it connects, wherein said cross-sectional area of said port is measured where it opens to said surface.

Please cancel claims 28, 31 and 32 without prejudice to the possibility of filing one or more continuing applications directed to the subject matter recited therein.

Please enter the following new claims for consideration by the Examiner:

33. (New) The suction member of claim 26, wherein said surface is substantially flat.

34. (New) The suction member of claim 26, wherein said surface is contoured to engage a curved surface of the heart.